THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) Yes, Sir. 4200 ICDS Projects are being run at present and 5.92 lakh Anganwadi Centres are sanctioned in the country.

(b) There are 505796 Anganwadi Workers and same number of helpers as on date. While Anganwadi Workers are paid honorarium ranging from Rs. 438/- to Rs. 563/- p.m., helpers are paid Rs. 260/- p.m. as honorarium. Anganwadi Workers have also been provided with the benefits of paid maternity leave and 20 days of paid absence in a year.

(c) and (d) The Government appreciates the voluntary efforts put in by Anganwadi Workers and Helpers in implementation of the ICDS Scheme. Accordingly, the Government has been increasing the amount of honorarium being paid to Anganwadi Workers and Helpers from time to time. The last increase was done in May, 1997. Besides the norms for honorarium for these workers fixed by Government of India, some State Governments and UT Administrations are paying them additional amount from their own sources. We have taken up this matter with the remaining State Governments to pay them additional amount. Besides this, these workers are required to attend training programmes aimed at their empowerment. They are given TA/DA etc. for attending the training programmes which was revised in 1999.

Status of Kendriya/Navodaya Vidyalaya Employees *vis-a-vis* Central Government Employees

†1757. SHRI GOVINDRAM MIRI: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that employees of Kendriya Vidyalayas and Navodaya Vidyalayas get their salary etc. from Consolidated Fund of India and hence they are Central Government employees;

(b) if so, whether they are not considered Central Government employees in several other matters; and

(c) what are the reasons for depriving them of various facilities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI JAYSINGRAO GAIKWAD PATIL): (a) to (c) Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti and Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan are autonomous organisations registered as Societies under Societies Registration Act, 1860.

†Original Notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

They are funded through grant-in-aid given by the Department of Secondary Education and Higher Education under the Ministry of Human Resource Development. Their employees are not considered as Central Government employees. They are given various facilities as applicable to them as autonomous organisations.

Educational Programmes for Backward Classes

1758. SHRI E. BALANANDAN: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether any steps have been taken by Government for implementation of educational programmes for backward classes in the country; and

(b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI JAYSINGRAO GAIKWAD PATIL): (a) and (b) The National Policy on Education lays special emphasis on removal of disparties and equalisation of educational opportunities of educationally backward social groups. All major programmes/schemes implemented by the Government including Operation Blackboard, Non-Formal Education, Teachers Education, National Programme for Nutritional Support to Primary Education, District Primary Education Programme, Total Literacy Campaigns and Area Intensive Programme for Educationally Backward Minorities aim at universalising access, reducing drop out and improving learning achievement of educationally backward social groups.

Higher Education Becoming Inaccessible to Weaker Sections

†1759. SHRI JANESHWAR MISRA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the higher and technical education is becoming inaccessible for weaker sections of the society;

(b) whether it is also a fact that their access to educational/ technical, private/public institutions is negligible; and

(c) if so, the steps being taken by Government to turn this social injustice into social justice?

†Original Notice of the Question was received in Hindi.